

Doctrine of Excommunication

1. In the Old Testament economy, excommunication was an established form of social punishment known as “The Ban” and is set forth in the Doctrine of Being Cut Off.
2. In the New Testament, an example of Jewish excommunication is referenced in the case of the blind man whose parents feared being excluded from the synagogue.
 - *John 9:19 And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? How then doth he now see? 20 His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: 21 But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself. 22 These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.*
3. Jesus warned that His followers would be hated and would be excommunicated for His name’s sake.
 - *Luke 6:22 Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake.*
4. In the New Testament church the practice of excommunication was established by Christ and consists of severing Christian brotherly fellowship if a person is found to be obstinate in sin.
 - *Matthew 18:15 Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. 16 But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. 17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.*
5. The apostle Paul claimed the principled right to exercise discipline and authority over converts to Christ.
 - *2 Corinthians 1:23 Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth.*
 - *2 Corinthians 13:10 Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the power which the Lord hath given me to edification, and not to destruction.*
6. A formal expression of excommunication is an acceptable and vital part of local church dogma and practice. It is commanded with apostolic authority under divine inspiration.

- *1 Corinthians 5:11 But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.*
 - *1 Timothy 1:20 Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.*
 - *Titus 3:10 A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject;*
7. Biblical excommunication consists in separation from the communion of the church and the taking of the Lord's Supper in particular.
 8. The purpose of excommunication is for the good of the sufferer and for the protection of faithful members.
 - The good of the sufferer. *1 Corinthians 5:5 To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.*
 - The protection of faithful members. *2 Timothy 3:17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*
 9. The Elders of the assembly, as the highest ecclesiastical authority in the local church, are entrusted with the duty of excommunication.
 - *1 Corinthians 5:3 For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed,*
 - *Titus 3:10 A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject;*
 10. The local church, as a whole, is responsible for enforcing the discipline against the offender.
 - *1 Corinthians 5:4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ.*
 11. Church discipline in general, and excommunication in particular, is to be administered despite any opposition on the part of a minority.
 - *2 Corinthians 2:6 Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many.*
 12. Excommunication is for an indefinite duration in order to elicit repentance with a view towards once more expressing love to the repentant one.
 - *2 Corinthians 2:8 Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him.*

13. Sincere evangelical gospel repentance is the condition of restoration.

- *2 Corinthians 2:7 So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.*

14. Sincere gospel repentance is to be expressed before the church.

- *2 Corinthians 2:10 To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave anything, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ;*

15. Specific sins lead to excommunication.

- Unconfessed and unrepentant sin. *Matthew 18:15 Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. 16 But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. 17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.*
- Teaching which is contrary to sound doctrine. *Romans 16:17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.*
- Lack of love for Christ. *1 Corinthians 16:22 If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha.*
- Conduct which is disorderly and characterized by gospel disobedience. *2 Thessalonians 3:6 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.*
- Apostasy. *1 Timothy 1:19 Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: 20 Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.*
- Heresy. *Titus 3:10 A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject;*
- Acts of immorality. *1 Corinthians 5 It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. 2 And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. 3 For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, 4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, 5 To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.*

6 Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? 7 Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: 8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. 9 I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators:

10 Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. 11 But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. 12 For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? 13 But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.